



Best Books of Brighton Young Adults



BOSTON
PUBLIC
LIBRARY
1973

FOREWORD

In the summer of '72 a display was set up in the Young Adult Room of the Brighton Branch Library highlighting the favorite books of the teenagers using this branch of the Boston Public Library. It consisted of a bulletin board with snapshots of the young adults and, on adjacent shelves, their favorite books accompanied by original annotations.

The exhibit was such a success that a printed booklet containing the reviews of the Brighton youngsters was planned. Here it is, in their own words, the favorite books of Brighton Young Adults.

*Kathleen Clark
Young Adults Librarian
Brighton Branch Library*



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"...the most beautiful book I ever read."

THE PIGMAN by Paul Zindel

Handsome devil John and Lumpy Lorraine have one thing in common: lousy parents. The only adult they can really relate to is the Pigman. Actually, his name is Mr. Angelo Pignati, and he's this lonely old Italian guy they get to know through a prank phone call. What starts out as a joke turns into a crazy, happy friendship. They go to the zoo to visit Booboo, the Pigman's favorite baboon; they also go to a big department store where the Pigman buys them all sorts of weird food like chocolate-covered ants, and snails, and even some roller skates. That's where the trouble starts. This is a very moving book and it's also hysterically funny at times. I think it's about the most beautiful book I ever read.

*Linda Cuggino, Mt. St. Joseph
Academy, 9th grade*

"...makes...you feel like you're right there."

GI DIARY by David Parks

This is the diary of a young GI in Vietnam. His picture of Army life is funny, exciting and sometimes pretty horrible, like the time he describes his best friend getting his head blown off in a ditch right next to him. Parks felt that it seemed like everybody whose stint was almost over was getting killed at the last minute, so his last few weeks in Nam were filled with this constant fear and tension about whether he'd make it out alive. I really liked this book because Parks makes everything so real you feel like you're right there with him--or you are actually him. It really showed what a nightmare Vietnam is, like he said at the end of the book, "It was hell. I never want to go back there as long as I live."

*Ray McKinnon, St. Columbkille High
School, 10th grade*

"...the book ends in a way that will shock you..."

GO ASK ALICE Author Anonymous

Until I read Go Ask Alice, I never liked to read. It's the diary of a fifteen-year-old girl on drugs, and it tells about all the really frightening things that happen to her. When she runs away to San Francisco, Alice meets a wealthy woman who pretends to be her friend and then tries to get Alice hooked on heroin. But her worst enemies were the kids at school who kept torturing her to make her go back on drugs once Alice had kicked the habit. But then everything starts to work out better: Alice falls in love with a boy named Joel, her parents forgive her for everything, she gets into a good crowd, and then the book ends in a way that will shock you.

*Terri McCartin, St. Mary's School
8th grade*

"...about a person not afraid to tell other people what he thinks."

CATCHER IN THE RYE by J. D. Salinger

Holden Caulfield is a sixteen-year-old reject who runs away from his exclusive boarding school and spends a weekend walking around New York City trying to find himself. Instead he keeps finding trouble: he starts by getting into an argument with a cab driver, then he goes to a nightclub and gets drunk and starts calling up girls he used to go with, eventually, he meets two nuns and contributes his last ten dollars to them. Some of the things he does are hysterically funny, other things just make you feel sorry for him, or agree with his attitudes, i.e., most adults and all stuck-up people are phonies. This is the best book I ever read about a person not afraid to tell other people what he thinks.

*Joe Quan, Edison Junior High
School, 9th grade*

"this book...scared me silly..."

YOU'LL LIKE MY MOTHER by Naomi Hintze

This is a story about a girl named Francesca whose husband dies in Vietnam while she is expecting their first baby. Having no one else to turn to, she decides to visit her mother-in-law, whom she has never met. Her mother-in-law turns out to be a very cruel woman who doesn't try to disguise her hatred for Francesca. Because of a sudden storm, Francesca is forced to spend the night, and starts to go into labor. Her child is born and the mother-in-law tells Francesca it is a monster..but is it? I liked this book because it scared me silly, which is a pretty close approximation of my normal state of mind anyway.

*Terri Tocci, Thomas A. Edison Junior
High School, 9th grade*

"...revealed many unknown aspects of...this highest paid athlete in history."

I'VE GOT TO BE ME by Derek Sanderson

This is the autobiography of the Bruins' very colorful and un-orthodox center. Unlike most sports biographies it explores the bad as well as the good aspects of the player's personality: how Sanderson dropped out of school at the age of fourteen to become a rink rat, how he got caught stealing, and how his father was the only person ever to command his respect. It also talks about his near brush with death when he almost fell into a canal. I really liked this book because it was true and revealed many unknown aspects of the personality of this highest paid athlete in history.

*Jev Tocci, Boston College High
School, 11th grade*

"...I thought science fiction would be boring, but..."

THE ANDROMEDA STRAIN by Michael Crichton

Until I read The Andromeda Strain, I thought science fiction would be boring, but this book really changed my mind. It's about a research satellite that returns to earth contaminated with a deadly bacteria that wipes out a whole town in Nevada. The story centers on the frantic efforts of five scientists to kill the bacteria before it destroys the entire population of the earth. This book was very different from anything I'd ever read and incredibly suspenseful. I recommend it to anyone who thinks they won't like science fiction.

*Linda Cuggino, Mt. St. Joseph Academy
9th grade*

"...written the way black people talk...the effect is...like poetry."

HIS OWN WHERE by June Jordan

Buddy and Angela are two teenagers who both have family problems. They try to escape their problems by being together. They fall in love, but Angela's parents don't want her to see Buddy. One night when her father beats her up, Angela runs away and goes to Buddy. That's when they decide to live in an abandoned stone shelter in a nearby cemetery. This beautiful love story was written the way black people talk, and the effect is sort of like poetry.

*Juliet David, Copley High School
9th grade*

"...almost hypnotically written."

THE PEARL by John Steinbeck

Kino is a Mexican Indian who lives a peaceful, if impoverished life with his wife Juana and baby Coyotito, both whom he treasures more than anything in the world. One day Kino finds the Pearl of the World, the largest and most lustrous pearl ever seen. And so begins his desperate struggle to wrest from life the things he feels can now be his. But it is also the beginning of a nightmare of greed and hatred and murder. In the end, the precious pearl robs Kino of all that he had treasured before he found it. I liked this book because it was very simply, but almost hypnotically written. Steinbeck's masterpiece is one of the most moving and powerful pictures of the longing, and frustration and the terrible evil inherent in man.

*Steven Tocci, St. Columbkille High
School, 11th grade*

"...Anne seemed...like your friend telling you her story."

THE DIARY OF A YOUNG GIRL by Anne Frank

This is the diary of a fourteen-year-old Jewish girl living in World War II Holland. In an abandoned building she and her family and some of their friends spent two years in hiding. During these years, Anne tells of her joys and her suffering, and of her first and last encounter with love. I really loved this book because Anne seemed so real--like she was your friend telling you her story. Her sense of humor was fantastic, especially considering what she was going through. This beautiful book is a testament to the strength and genius of a remarkable human being.

*Mary Anne Murphy, St. Columbkille
High School
11th grade*

"This is one drug book that wasn't phony..."

TUNED OUT by Maia Wojciechowska

Kevin was Jim's older brother, and Jim worshipped him. But when Kevin came home from college and started to introduce Jim to drugs, things began to get a little shaky. Jim didn't want to get Kevin angry by refusing, yet he saw how drugs were ruining his brother's life. This is one drug book that wasn't phony and it really showed how doing drugs can mess you up.

*Carol Mahoney, Brighton High School
10th grade*

"Basically...a very weird book..."

NARCISSUS AND GOLDMUND by Hermann Hesse

Taking place in the middle ages, this is the story of a young man named Goldmund who goes to a monastery to study. There he meets a young monk named Brother Narcissus who nurses Goldmund back to health when he becomes seriously ill. Narcissus tells Goldmund that he will never become a good monk unless he recovers his childhood. And so, Goldmund begins a long journey in the course of which he finds himself about to be sentenced to death for adultery. Miraculously, he is rescued by two monks, one of whom is Narcissus. I liked this book because it was unlike anything I've ever read and it explored aspects of human nature that I'd never known about. Basically, it's a very weird book, and that's the kind of book I like to read.

*Terri Tocci, Thomas A. Edison Junior
High School, 9th grade*

"...you...see what living in the ghetto really involves..."

MANCHILD IN THE PROMISED LAND by Claude Brown

This is a true story that tells all about the author's life in the ghetto: how he became a pusher, then a thief to support his habit, and how he eventually overcame the forces that kept him from controlling his own life and made something of himself. This book helps you to see what living in the ghetto really involves: too many people living in too small a space, kids staying out all night, people going hungry and so on. The story is very exciting and well written and I think it would help white people who read it to be less prejudiced.

*Alfred Rufo, Boston College High
School, 10th grade*

"...one of the best books I ever read..."

THAT WAS THEN, THIS IS NOW by S. E. Hinton

Mark and Bryon were almost like brothers even though Mark was adopted by Bryon's mother when he was nine. Bryon really admired Mark: he thought of him as a person who could do anything and get away with it. They were inseparable until Bryon started going with a girl named Cathy. When Bryon found out it was Mark who was selling drugs to Cathy's younger brother M & M, who was in a mental hospital because of a bad trip, all his loyalty for Mark dissolved. Bryon turned Mark in to the police and from then on Mark hated him completely. Bryon hated himself and started losing interest in everything, even Cathy. This was one of the best books I ever read and it's really fantastic considering the author is only 24 years old.

*Jean Nigro, Thomas A. Edison Junior
High School, 9th grade*

"extremely suspenseful...very easy to read."

THE STRANGE CASE OF DR. JEKYLL AND MR. HYDE by Robert Louis
Stevenson

This is the story of Dr. Jekyll who used to conduct strange experiments in his laboratory. He discovered a way to change normal people into monsters. He took the potion himself and turned into the evil, hunchbacked, bug-eyed Mr. Hyde. At midnight, he would turn into Mr. Hyde but in the day he returned to his normal self, forgetting about all the horrible exploits of his alter-ego. This was an extremely suspenseful book and very easy to read.

*Gerard Hooley, St. Columbkille High
School, 9th grade*

"...showed how her parents' selfishness and her friends' love affected Lisa..."

LISA BRIGHT AND DARK by John Neufeld

Lisa knew she was going crazy but nobody believed her. She asked her parents to take her to a psychiatrist but they refused because they didn't want to ruin the family name. Her friends began to notice that she had days on which she wore bright colors, and was happy and talkative, and then she had days on which she was sad and quiet and wore dark colors. Three of her closest friends formed their own counseling service for her and eventually convinced Lisa's parents that she needed professional help. I really liked this book because it showed how her parents' selfishness and her friends' love affected Lisa in bad and good ways both.

*Debbie Tempesta, Mt. St. Joseph
Academy, 9th grade*

"...really shows what a cop has to go through..."

THE FRENCH CONNECTION by Robert Moore

While these two N. Y. narcs are trying to find the head of the Mafia, they accidentally stumble upon the largest haul of heroin (112 lbs.) ever found. As they tear up the walls of the East Brooklyn apartment, they also uncover a small arsenal of submachine guns. Then there's this great chase sequence in which they try to catch the guy who imported the heroin from France to Montreal in the first place. I liked this book because it was true and one of the most suspenseful stories I ever read. It really shows what a cop has to go through: staying up for two days in a row with only three hours sleep, and so on. I recommend it to anyone who likes factual, exciting stories and who thinks the movie is better than the book.

*Jev Tocci, Boston College High
School, 11th grade*

"...one of the most enchanting love stories I've ever read..."

THE LOVE OF SEVEN DOLLS by Paul Gallico

Mouche was a seventeen-year-old French girl who had failed miserably in her ambition to become a great actress, and so she was about to throw herself into the Seine. Then suddenly the voice of a little, red-haired puppet scolded her for giving up so easily, and so began Mouche's love affair with seven puppets and the mysterious man who gave them life. I thought this was going to be a kid's book, but it turned out to be one of the most enchanting love stories I've ever read. It was really different, too, from other love stories where the girl falls in love with the good guy in the story, because Mouche falls in love with the seemingly evil Capitaine Coq, through the seven puppets.

*Laura Eichenlaub, Mt. St. Joseph
Academy, 10th grade*

"...shows how a great baseball player got started."

YAZ by Carl Yastrzemski with Al Hirshberg

This is the story of a man who wanted to be a great baseball player. He started as an amateur and worked his way up. Game after game he got home runs. Once his back was broken while he was running into second base. He won the triple crown award for the best batter in the National League three times. As far back as 1967, he was earning \$100,000 a year. In that same year, he was responsible for the home run that helped the Red Sox win the series. I liked this book because it shows how a great baseball player got started.

*Eddie Polselli, Thomas A. Edison
Junior High School
9th grade*

"...shows a son's view of his father in a very humorous way."

LIFE WITH FATHER by Clarence Day

This is the true story of Clarence Day, a remarkable man whose son, also named Clarence, made him known to the world with this fascinating book. Even though it takes place in the 1890's, it is very interesting and realistic. Mr. Day was an extremely orderly and stubborn man who always insisted that he was right, whether he was or not. While he was the most stingy and tight-fisted of people, his wife Vinny was just the opposite and was always buying the most extravagant dresses and hats. One time Clarence and his three brothers wanted their father to buy them horses, but he refused, only to give in because of his own love of riding. His stubbornness also showed itself in his fanatical belief that he was immune from sickness. Then he got the flu and was in bed for three weeks. I really liked this book because it shows a son's view of his father in a very humorous way.

*Joe Cocuzzo, Our Lady's of Newton
8th grade*

"...wasn't preachy...very believable."

THE JUNKIE PRIEST by John D. Harris

This is the true story of a priest who has dedicated his life to helping women drug addicts. Father Daniel Egan helped these women to get jobs, apartments, clothing, and most importantly, he helped them to stay off drugs. He asked wealthy New York bankers and businessmen to donate money to build a halfway house. When I read this book I really felt sorry for the way these women were destroying their lives. You really get involved because you never know if one of the girls will start taking drugs again or overdose. It wasn't preachy, either, but very believable.

*Julie Murtagh, St. Columbkille High
School, 9th grade*

"...assigned reading...[but] a really fascinating book."

TO KILL A MOCKINGBIRD by Harper Lee

This story of Jem and Scout Finch, son and daughter of Atticus Finch, an Alabama lawyer, shows how three people living by their consciences affected the conscience of an entire town. When a black boy is accused of raping a white woman, Atticus Finch takes on his defense. The only witnesses happen to be Scout and Jem, and it is their testimony that will determine the life or death of the boy. Even though it was assigned reading, this turned out to be a really fascinating book. When I got fifty pages into the story, I just had to keep on reading.

*Carl Tempesta, Marine Military
Academy, 10th grade*

"...the author really understands teenagers..."

MY DARLING, MY HAMBURGER by Paul Zindel

This is a story about two couples who are entirely unlike each other. The girls, Maggie and Liz, are best friends but completely different in looks and personality. Maggie is clumsy and has dull, brown hair, and Liz is very pretty with silky, blonde hair. Maggie's boyfriend Dennis is tall and skinny with enormous feet and Liz' boyfriend Sean is really handsome. Although Maggie is the one who is worried about Dennis getting fresh with her, it is Liz and Sean who get into trouble. This is a good book because it is exciting, interesting and funny. I think the author really understands teenagers a lot better than most of the people who write books for them.

*Robin Simmons, Brighton High School
10th grade*

"Some adventures...really funny and gross..."

RED SKY AT MORNING by Richard Bradford

Josh Arnold was a teenager during World War II when his father moved the family to the mountains of New Mexico while he went into the Navy. There Josh meets his best friend Stennie with whom he has lots of weird adventures and almost gets shot, when an irate father mistakenly assumes that it is Josh and Stennie who are responsible for his twin daughters' pregnancies. Some of Josh's adventures are really funny and gross like when he falls into a dead, decaying horse, and some of them are sad like when his father dies. I liked this book because it was about someone my own age but living in a different part of the country.

*Mary Anne Murphy, St. Columbkille
High School,
11th grade*

"[for] anyone who likes love stories with an unusual twist."

THE PHAEDRA COMPLEX by Jeannette Eyerly

When her mother decided to remarry, fifteen-year-old Laura resented Michael Barrington, the man she felt was coming between her and her mother. But gradually, with all the attention and concern Michael showered on his new stepchild, Laura's feelings underwent a mysterious change. Laura became equally confused and upset because now she was in love with a man who was old enough to be her father and who was also her mother's husband. Then Laura met David, a boy her own age, who brings her out of her infatuation. I liked this book because it explored an emotional problem in a very mature, realistic way. I recommend it to anyone who likes love stories with an unusual twist.

*Debbie Belt, Brighton High School,
10th grade*

